

No. 95.

Woman's Union Missionary Society.

THE HOUSEHOLD PET.

By MISS GARDNER, of Calcutta, India.

LITTLE Tulsi played in the sunlight, that came streaming into the open door of her mother's house, tottling over the threshold, into the great world of light outside, and crawling back to pick up the sunbeams, that she had left behind on the floor. It seemed as if they might be picked up by her baby fingers, but not succeeding in getting them, she tires of her play, and runs to her mother to be crooned over, and talked to, as only mothers know how to do. Little Tulsi is a high-caste Hindu baby, and her home is in the midst of a far-off Indian city. A fortunate baby she is too, for the gods have been very kind, and in the zenana, around their mother and gladdening the eyes of their father, are four lovely boys. Very fortunate, a favorite of the gods is Tulsi's mother, and very fortunate also is the little Tulsi herself. If she had come into the world first, very little welcome would she have found. But when one after another, the boys came and grew up from babyhood to boyhood, strong healthy little fellows, the father said "never mind" when Tulsi appeared, "we can afford to have one girl," and the mother heart warmed toward the baby daughter, and Tulsi's life was full of joy and love.

Even the father sometimes took her in his arms and caressed her, and the boys thought a sister a very lovely thing to have, and brought her bits of the good things which it was their privilege to share with their father. Tulsi thought the world a very beautiful place, as she rolled in the sunshine, and drank in the still warmer sunshine of her mother's love.

One day a strange thing happened in this little girl's life. She had grown from creeping, to standing firmly on her sturdy little legs, and her two bright eyes were capable of taking in a great deal, and her fingers! you who know anything of baby fingers, can easily imagine of what mischievous exploits, hers were capable. It was when she was about three years old that this strange thing happened to her, as she sat one day near her mother weaving bits of grass together to make a basket, and not meeting with much success in her occupation. Suddenly the door darkened, and in stepped the strangest looking person Tulsi had ever seen. She crept very close to her mother, and was too frightened to scream. Even her mother was discomposed at this strange apparition, and pulled her cloth over her face, and sat quite quiet. This new comer was the Zenana teacher, who had been visiting in the neighboring houses, about whom Tulsi's mother had been hearing for a long time. In speaking of her one day, to one of her friends, she had said "I wish she would come to see me." The friend had given very glowing accounts of the lady, her singing, and the many things she could do, even though she was a woman, and she thought it would be pleasant if she would come and teach her what her neighbors and friends were learning. Only the day before, Gopal's wife had

come to sit with her and brought the loveliest scarf, which she was knitting of various bright wools, and Tulsi's mother thought how much she would like to make some for her husband and children. But she had never seen an English dressed person before, and the coming was so sudden, that for a moment she lost her presence of mind, and retired behind her sari, so that the visitor saw only a figure shrouded in white from head to foot, with a frightened little girl crouched close to her. The lady was accustomed to such receptions, and began by gentle words, to draw out the timid woman, till by and by, first one eye, and then the other, emerged from the cloth, and the whole face was revealed. Tulsi's mother became thoroughly interested in telling the Mem Sahiba about her boys, and how good the gods had been to her in giving her four boys before the coming of the little daughter. Tulsi forgot her shyness, and was soon absorbed in examining the strange things the lady wore.

An hour passed pleasantly, and the visitor must go ; not however till in answer to earnest entreaties, she had promised to come again and teach, as she had been doing in the houses of their neighbors. Tulsi followed her to the door with her little hand full of cardamon seeds, which her mother had given her to present to the lady.

That night, when the father came home, and the boys returned from school, very wonderful were the stories they heard. Tulsi's father, long before knew all about this lady. He had often met her in the narrow streets and lanes about his house, and he had heard from his brother Babus too, what her errand was. He knew that she was a messenger of

the Lord Jesus Christ, and about the Christ religion he knew a good deal, and in his heart he thought about it more than he ever felt like putting into words. In his youth, he had gone to a Mission School in a city near by his native village, and there had become convinced of the truth of the Scriptures. He had made up his mind to come out from his people, and take a stand on the Lord's side ; but before doing so, he confided his wish to his father, who horror stricken at what he heard, at once removed him from the school, and taking him to a distant village, shut him up in the house of his grandfather. There, every influence was brought to bear upon him, to give up his intention, and every device used, to divert his mind, till at last the lad promised to think no more about it. Then marriage arrangements were made for him with the daughter of a high-caste wealthy neighbor, and in the gaieties of the wedding festivities, the impressions died out of the boy's mind, and care was taken, that he should not be placed again where he could hear anything that would bring them back. So he grew to manhood a Hindu, so far as outward observance was concerned, but with no belief in his heart for anything. He easily gave his consent, that his wife and little daughter, should be taught by the Mem Sahiba, even though he knew that it meant teaching them the truths that had brought so much trouble to him. Trouble, because he had not the courage to stand by his convictions in the face of great opposition, forgetting what he had been taught in the Mission School. "If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me."

It was arranged therefore that the Mem Sahiba should

come, and she began to visit regularly. Tulsi's mother being bright and quick, soon mastered the art of reading, and was able to read intelligibly in the simple books given her. Tulsi herself, took great pride in being able to bring her primer and say a short lesson. The good time for both, was when the lesson-books closed, the lady opened another book which she always carried with her, and read to them beautiful things, or what Tulsi liked better still, sang to them songs in their own language.

Thus the years went on, till the little girl was eight years old, and could read well. Her mother learned many things, and among her simple neighbors was looked upon as quite a learned woman. She had learned however something of which she did not speak to them, something which she kept in her own heart.

But now a change must come to this quiet happy family. Tulsi being eight years old must be married. The father and mother have talked it over, and the mother with a real longing after the better things, begs that the marriage may be postponed. She even pleaded that they may all come out, and confess the Christ who has become so dear to her. The husband who resisted so many years ago, finds it easier to resist to-day, and allured by the wealth of the family from which has come the offer to marry his daughter, he turns a deaf ear to his wife's entreaties, and makes the arrangements for little Tulsi with a man three times her age. Great was the display of the wedding ; with flourish of trumpet, and beat of drums was it inaugurated, and carried on through many days of celebration ; fireworks and all sorts of festivi-

ties, followed each hour of the day, and little Tulsi covered with jewels and rich clothes, thought that being married was indeed a most delightful thing, and wished it might go on forever. But everything has an end, and the wedding festivity came to its close all too soon. A part of the marriage agreement had been, that the little wife should be taken to her husband's home to be brought up in the zenana of his mother, till she was old enough to perform the duties of a wife. Poor Tulsi's mother did not know this, until it was too late to remonstrate, for her husband had discreetly kept it from her. Never before, had the little one slept away from her mother, never before, been away from the beloved home circle. Now she finds herself separated from them all, in a strange place, surrounded by strange people who stare at her, criticise and laugh at her, till the poor little weary homesick girl's life is a burden to her. They do not mean to be unkind, but to Tulsi everything that is not home, is not pleasant, and like the petted spoiled child she is, she spends her time crying, and refuses to be either obedient or loving in the new home. So this little child-wife is punished by the mother-in-law, to bring her into subjection, as two other of her sons' wives had been taken in hand, till the spirit crushed out of them, death had mercifully come, to release them from a lifelong bondage.

Not so however is it to be with Tulsi, our merry glad-hearted little Tulsi who had never before in her life known a sorrow or a care.

She had been a wife only a month, when her husband sickened and died. Alas ! whose fault was it, that this man who had indulged in every kind of excess his whole life,

should not have power to resist disease when it came ; whose fault but that of his little girl-wife ? Henceforth what a life was hers ! What reproaches are heaped upon this child-widow ! Her pretty clothes and rich jewels are taken away. In a coarse white cloth wrapped around her, the rest of her life must be spent in fasting and penance, to atone for her great sinfulness. She must be the drudge of the household. She must enjoy nothing.

Our poor petted, loved and loving little Tulsi, what can be done for her ? What can be done for thousands, yes millions of little Tulsies over this great Indian Empire. Women of England and America what *can* you do ? What *will* you do ?

The "Woman's Union Missionary Society" is an association of all evangelical denominations. It was formed in 1860, and is the *first* organization in America which opened Zenana work. Three large cities in India and several suburbs are its centres of operation, where 50 missionaries and 66 native assistants are teaching 4,000 pupils every year in the Zenanas. Will you not feel it a duty as well as privilege to give to this Society, which seeks only to spread the name of Christ in those sad homes of India ?

Send for the "Missionary Link," issued six times a year. Subscription, 50 cents.

MRS. HENRY JOHNSON, *President.*

MISS S. D. DOREMUS, *Foreign Corresponding Secretary.*

MRS. WASHINGTON CHOATE, *Home Corresponding Secretary.*

MRS. RUFUS WAPLES, { *Assistant Treasurers.*

MISS MARY S. STONE, {

MISS H. KINGSBURY, *Treasurer of "Missing Link."*

OCT 23 1901

LEAFLETS ON WORK IN INDIA

(NOW IN PRINT)

OF

Woman's Union Missionary Society,

MISSION ROOM, 41 BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK.

No.		Each, Cts.
25.	What a Pair of Slippers Did For India	2
40.	Befutti's Doll	2
42.	Gift for a Little Bride	1
66.	Kasheba's Plea	3
76.	Givers for Jesus	3
82.	Wayside Guests	2
87.	Saved	2
92.	Sad Weddings	2
93.	Shall We Teach Them	2
95.	The Household Pet	4
	Story and Work	Free.
	Desolate Widows	"
	KARDOO : A STORY OF ZENANA LIFE50